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The Politics of Time in Legal History: A Reflection on the Power of Graphic Narratives

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Abstract

This article reflects on the politics of time in legal history through the lens of *Camino y Ruptura*, a graphic history I authored based on my doctoral research on Indigenous legal practices in early 20th-century Cauca, Colombia. By tracing the legal and political strategies of Indigenous communities – particularly their use of petitions, archives, and legal norms – I examine how alternative, non-linear conceptions of time inform Indigenous engagements with law, history, and political resistance. Drawing on both archival sources and contemporary Indigenous epistemologies, I argue that time operates not merely as a backdrop but as a central political category in struggles for land, justice, and recognition. Through the use of graphic narrative, *Camino y Ruptura* seeks to visualize the coexistence of past, present, and future as a spiral, challenging dominant legal-historical methodologies rooted in Western linear temporality. The article reflects on the possibilities and tensions of combining historical scholarship and visual storytelling to construct a more inclusive and plural legal history.

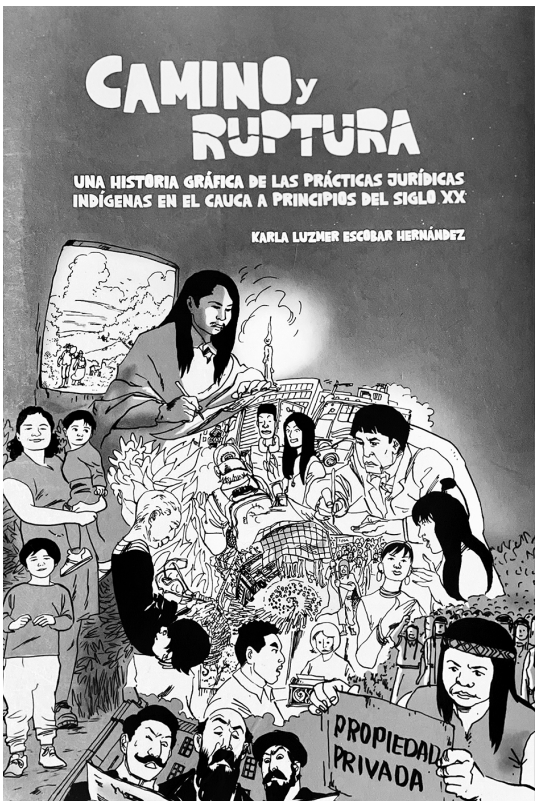
Keywords: legal history, indigenous temporalities, graphic narrative, Gran Cauca, plural histories

Karla L. Escobar H.

The Politics of Time in Legal History: A Reflection on the Power of Graphic Narratives

»And from the wombs of Indigenous women
are born the new flowers of intelligence,
adorned in richness, they will unite to form
a glorious garden in the heart of Colombian
territory, drawing the attention of the
civilization of national and foreign exploiters.
Thus, comrades, our rights will soon
change in our favor, because a beggar,
the son of an orphaned Indigenous woman,
will sit upon the throne of our rightful claims,
wielding the scepter of intelligence
with which human nature has endowed him.
That is why the Nariño indigenous
woman is present at this national Indigenous
gathering, with courage and unity,
like a chorus of enraged eagles.
We will achieve our vindication so that
justice may be done for us, so that
we may be protected by the authorities
– or we shall take justice
into our own hands ...« [1]

Yolanda Guaical
First Popular Meeting of Colombian Indigenous Peoples
Third Regional Indigenous Meeting of Cauca
July 15, 1973
Silvia, Cauca


CAMINO y RUPTURA
UNA HISTORIA GRÁFICA DE LAS PRÁCTICAS JURÍDICAS INDÍGENAS EN EL CAUCA A PRINCIPIOS DEL SIGLO XX
KARLA LUZMER ESCOBAR HERNÁNDEZ
PROPIEDAD PRIVADA

Cover of *Camino y Ruptura: A Graphic History of Indigenous Legal Practices at the Beginning of the 20th Century*, 2024
(Full size picture on page 59)

Camino y Ruptura is a graphic history published in April 2024 by Ediciones Uniandes (Bogotá, Colombia) and funded by the Max Planck Institute for Legal History and Legal Theory (Frankfurt am Main, Germany). The work is based on my doctoral research on Indigenous legal practices in Cauca, Colombia, at the beginning of the 20th century. My study, titled *Citizenship, Justice, and Indigeneity: A Study of Indigenous Legal Practices in Cauca, 1889–1938*, examines the land struggles led by various Indigenous leaders in the region, as well as how they utilized, interpreted, and contributed to the creation of new legislation regarding collective Indigenous land ownership. These stories were reconstructed from numerous *memoriales* (legal petitions) written by Indigenous people in Gran Cauca between the late 19th and early 20th centuries, which I consulted in the Archivo Central del Cauca and the Archivo General de la Nación. Additionally, I drew from other historical sources, such as private correspondence – most notably from the General Bonilla Private Archive –, newspapers, and legislative records.

1 Transcription of the Tercer Encuentro Regional Indígena del Cauca, Fundación Colombia Nuestra, Audio Archive, Silvia, Cauca 1973.

Camino y Ruptura is the first legal historical research project published as a graphic history, produced through a collaboration between the Max Planck Institute for Legal History and Legal Theory and the Faculty of Law of the Universidad de los Andes. However, it is not the first legal historical work to explore the comic format to communicate research findings.[2] As Hillary Chute emphasized in the inaugural lecture at the HistorioGRAPHICS meeting in June 2023 in Munich, graphic history is no longer an ›anomaly‹; it is now a large and complex genre with multiple possibilities for narrative exploration that is also used in academia. However, what can we explore better when using the comic format for legal historical research exactly? In this contribution, I want to talk about the politics of time and the role that this style of reflection has in contemporary legal historical scholarship.

The book opens with the words of Yolanda Guaical, an Indigenous leader from Nariño, Colombia who, in 1973, participated in the First Popular Meeting of Colombian Indigenous Peoples. The first time I encountered the transcription of Yolanda Guaical's speech, it struck me as enigmatic. In my notes from 2018, I jotted down: »Her rhetoric is too elaborate, almost baroque (reminiscent of Manuel Quintín Lame) ... It is a striking passage, though its meaning eludes me ... To grasp her vision fully, we must anchor female claims for justice more firmly in their context.« It was only later that I began to untangle some of these initial impressions and reflect on them more deeply.

The connection between her words and those of the Indigenous leader Manuel Quintín Lame became clearer to me in 2020, two years after my initial reading. While revisiting the pamphlet *El derecho de la mujer indígena en Colombia: manifiesto de catorce mil mujeres lamistas* (The Right of the Indigenous Woman in Colombia: Manifesto of Fourteen Thousand Lamista Women), which proposed a right to rebel against unjust laws and circulated widely in Cauca, Huila, and Tolima in 1927, I noticed striking parallels between Yolanda Guaical's language and that of Quintín Lame. This discovery suggested that the leaflet had not only reached traditionally Lameist regions but had also traveled beyond them – even into Nariño, where Guaical was from – retaining its relevance as late as 1973, nearly half a century after its original publication.

El inicio de la conversa
Y de los vientres del sexo femenino indígena nacen las nuevas flores de inteligencia y vestidas de riqueza se unirán para formar un jardín glorioso en medio del país colombiano y llamará la atención a la civilización de exploradores nacionales y extranjeros. Así, compañeros, cambiarán en poco tiempo los derechos que nos pertenecen…
Yolanda Guaical, 1973

Past and present united through the words of Yolanda Guaical
(Full size picture on page 86)

The 1927 document purportedly carries the endorsement of 14,000 Lameist women from across Colombia, yet much about its creation and dissemination remains shrouded in mystery. Scholars have speculated that its composition may have been mediated by Quintín Lame or his secretaries, emphasizing the importance of understanding the collective processes through which such texts were constructed and read. Julieta Lemaitre's research further revealed that significant portions of *El Derecho de la Mujer Indígena* drew heavily from José Vicente Concha's *Tratado de Derecho Penal* (Treatise on Criminal Law), published in 1890.[3] Not only that, Lemaitre's study also shows how Concha himself paraphrased some discussions about justice from the Catalan theologian Jaime Balmes, who sought to adapt Thomistic philosophy for modern audiences at

2 Corten / Klein (2022); Conyngham (2021); Hall (2021); Getz / Clarke (2012).
3 Concha (1890).

the beginning of the 19th century in Spain. It is important to notice that Balmes' work played a pivotal role in shaping early 20th-century Colombian legal thought, which, after conservatives took power at the beginning of the century, strove to reconcile Catholic doctrine with the tenets of modern legal science.[4]

Despite its foundation in conservative jurisprudence, the manifesto issued by the hypothetical »14,000 Lameist women« in 1927 envisioned a political order vastly different from that championed by elite conservatives of the time. They invoked Balmes' words not because they saw them as inherently just, but because these writings from the past could be repurposed to legitimize their demands for justice and ensure that they were heard by the Colombian state. At the same time, this rhetoric allowed them to envision an alternative political order. By appealing to Balmes, they not only strengthened their claims before the government but also fueled their vision of a different future.

Over time, this discourse evolved and gained independence, transcending its origins. By 1973, the resonant phrases of the 1927 pamphlet had taken on new life, recontextualized within an era marked by shifting social movements and aspirations. Though Yolanda Guaical's demands echoed the sense of injustice voiced by earlier Lameists, they expanded into a broader, multisectoral struggle. In her impassioned address, she called for greater solidarity among Indigenous, peasant, and working-class movements, emphasizing the need for collective action to challenge entrenched structures of power. Drawing on the rhetoric of the 1927 pamphlet, Guaical not only honored its legacy but also adapted its message to the evolving political landscape of the 1970s. Her words reflected a shift from a strictly Indigenous claim for justice to a more inclusive call for social transformation, uniting diverse groups in their pursuit of rights and recognition. She demanded

> an integral and democratic agrarian reform, for the rights of agricultural workers, for a better standard of living aligned with that of workers, teachers, and students, striving for Colombia to become a free, prosperous, and egalitarian homeland.[5]

An analysis that fails to consider the historical and contextual dimensions of normative discourses might hastily draw a direct line between Thomas Aquinas and Yolanda Guaical, dismissing the possibility of a distinctively Indigenous legal tradition. A more nuanced, historically grounded approach – one conscious of the pitfalls of teleological and linear thinking – reveals how Guaical's thought synthesizes diverse strands of discourse, weaving together elements of Catholic theology, colonial legal traditions, democratic expectations, gendered life experiences, and grassroots resistance in order to imagine possible futures.

Her words at the beginning of the book serve as a portent of the comic's structure, where past, present, and future constantly intertwine, evoking the spiral used by various Andean communities to represent the passage of time. This narrative approach not only reflects the fluidity of temporal experience in the Andean world but also underscores the political role of time discourses in shaping resistance and histor-

A los 13 años de Manuel Quintín, los Lame lograron comprar un terreno en San Alfonso.
ESTÁ COMPLETA LA CANTIDAD.
MUY BIEN. AHORA ESTA TIERRA ES SUYA.
EL TERRITORIO DE LA QUINTINADA. MAPA PARLANTE
Lame viviría las guerras de 1885, 1895 y la Guerra de los Mil Días, a sus 2, 12 y 16 años.
Esta última guerra cobraría la vida de su hermano menor, asesinado a machetazos en 1899 por una guerrilla liberal.
SO-LI-CI-TUD DE PER-SO-NE-RÍA JU-RÍ-DI-CA, MMM
El abogado en casa
Lame no participó en la Guerra de los Mil Días bajo el mando de otros indígenas, sino bajo la autoridad del coronel Carlos Albán. Esto, debido a su condición de terrajero. En su biografía, afirmó que fue allí donde recibió lecciones de escritura, legislación e historia.
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Quintín Lame's life and the *Quintinada* Talking Map
(Full size picture on page 97)

4 Lemaitre (2017).

5 Fundación Colombia Nuestra (1973) 24.

ical consciousness. The following sections will explore how these discourses challenge conventional notions of historical time and how different political conceptions of time create spaces for political struggle and transformation.

I. The Spiral of Time in the Indigenous Cauca

Qhipnayra uñtasis sarnaqapxañani
Aymara aphorism[6]

Time has been a central category of analysis in understanding the Indigenous movement in Colombia.[7] These reflections are not only essential for interpreting local historical narratives but also for grasping the dynamics of regional Indigenous organizing. One of the most insightful critiques to emerge in the Cauca region comes from a collective historical knowledge-building exercise known as *Los Mapas Parlantes* (The Talking Maps).

Developed in the 1970s as an educational tool in collaboration with several Indigenous communities, *Los Mapas Parlantes* were part of a broader historical recovery project linked to the struggle for land. According to historian María Teresa Findji, who participated in their creation, this collective approach to history sought to challenge dominant narratives of progress that relegated Indigenous peoples to the past and equated them with backwardness. The perception of Indigenous identity as something to be eradicated was reinforced from multiple perspectives: nationalist historiography, which celebrated heroic figures while largely excluding Indigenous presence, and Marxist historiography, which viewed *resguardos* (Indigenous reservations) as a ›feudal‹ institution that needed to be dismantled.[8]

The recovery of history through *Los Mapas Parlantes* aimed to transform historical research into a tool for building legal arguments. One of the earliest efforts by the academic and non-academic researchers involved in the project was to focus on locating deeds or colonial titles of regional *resguardos*, which could serve as legal evidence to shape a new legal reality in courts and government offices. This practice was not new; the search for and preservation of such documents had long been crucial for maintaining *resguardos* throughout both the colonial and republican periods.

ESCRITURA DE MEMORIALES
INDÍGENAS DESPUÉS DE 1890
CONSTITUCION POLITICA
DE LOS
Estados Unidos de Colombia,
SANCIONADA EL
8 DE MAYO DE 1863.
En nombre de Dios
CONSTITUCION POLITICA DE
COLOMBIA
Título I
De la Nación y el territorio.
¡LAS LEYES QUE PROTEGÍAN EL RESGUARDO HAN DESAPARECIDO!
TENGO ALGUNOS CONTACTOS QUE NOS PODRÍAN AYUDAR.
NOSOTROS, LOS INDÍGENAS DEL RESGUARDO DE...
ESTE FALLO ES CUESTIONABLE... DEBEMOS ESCALAR LA PETICIÓN.
46

Writing of Indigenous legal claims after 1890
(Full size picture on page 98)

However, as Findji notes, the archival work aimed at recovering lost Indigenous lands needed to be complemented by other forms of historical reconstruction that included diverse records, such as oral accounts. This is where the methodological design of *Los Mapas Parlantes* played a crucial role. The maps depicted historical scenes open to multiple interpretations, depending on the observer. Elders shared stories based on lived experiences, while younger community members contributed their own perspectives, ensuring the intergenerational transmission of knowledge. As more people participated, the maps became increasingly detailed, incorporating elements like utensils, clothing styles, customs, and stories.

Findji observes that during the creation of these maps, a distinct conception of time emerged – one

6 Quoted and translated by Rivera Cusicanqui (2015) 11 as: »By looking back and forward (to the future-past), we can walk in the present-future.«

7 Rappaport (1990); Findji (2019).

8 Findji (2019) 391.

that echoed the time-related notions found in Quechua and Aymara languages, where the future is seen as something located in the past, or what Spanish speakers typically regard as the past. A similar understanding of time can also be found in the languages (Paez and Namtrik) spoken by the co-creators of the *Mapas Parlantes*. According to Findji, this notion of the past is composed of ancestral tracks meant to be followed.

For Indigenous communities in Cauca, recovering history was not only about reclaiming land; it was also about redefining identity by reinterpreting the past and articulating a new way of understanding historical time. This perspective was visualized as a spiral – one that people traverse by walking backward. Moving toward the future, then, meant stepping into the unknown while being guided by ancestral wisdom to navigate present challenges. In this historical spiral, political arguments are constructed and guide political struggles, shaping the path forward. As a result, the *Mapas Parlantes* created a spiral path in which the past, present, and future intertwine.

In this spiral, different moments of the past overlapped, not only shaping the lived world but also enabling the imagination of alternative futures. This way of engaging with time resonates with contemporary Indigenous thinkers from other regions, such as Ailton Krenak (Brazil), who speaks of an »ancestral future«,[9] and Nick Estes (USA), who similarly asserts that »our history is the future«.[10]

II. How This Notion of Time Relates to the So-Called Western Concept of Time

Reflections on time as a concept have been diverse within the social sciences and span several decades. Sociologists and anthropologists have long explored how different societies conceptualize time, often drawing distinctions between Western notions and those of ›the others‹.

In anthropology, a seminal work on this issue is E.E. Evans-Pritchard's *The Nuer: A Description of the Modes of Livelihood and Political Institutions of a Nilotic People* (1940).[11] In this study, Evans-Pritchard examined the Nuers' conceptions of time and space in Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, presenting them as fundamentally different from Western notions. According to Evans-Pritchard, the Nuer were primarily focused on the immediate present rather than the future. Their perception of time was cyclical, shaped by the repetitive rhythms of agricultural and pastoral activities. In contrast to Western societies, which emphasize recorded history and long-term planning, the Nuer were depicted as having little interest in history or the distant future. While Evans-Pritchard acknowledged the role of oral tradition in transmitting knowledge, he argued that it did not reference a remote past. As a result, he framed Nuer temporality as entirely cyclical, devoid of a linear past or future – a perspective that significantly influenced the anthropological analysis of non-Western societies worldwide.

These simplistic representations of ›the others‹ conceptions of time faced significant critiques, particularly in the 1980s. One of the most influential critiques came from Johannes Fabian. In *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (1983), Fabian argued that anthropologists, in their attempts to understand and represent cultures distinct from their own, often constructed narratives in which ›the other‹ was placed in a separate or ›timeless‹ period. He termed this phenomenon *allochronism* – the portrayal of certain societies as existing in a temporality distinct from that of the anthropologist. According to Fabian, such disciplinary frameworks reinforced power relations and established hierarchical knowledge structures, positioning Western societies as temporally ›advanced‹ while relegating others to an imagined past.[12] Following a similar line of critique, Nancy D. Munn (1992) questioned the so-called »anthropology of time«, highlighting the oversimplifications of linear and cyclical frameworks. She argued that all societies exhibit both linear and cyclical temporalities depending on context, calling into question the rigid dichotomy often imposed by anthropological analysis.[13]

In the realm of law, Carol Greenhouse's work (1989) challenged prevailing assumptions about temporal models. She demonstrated the intrinsic link between temporality and legality, showing that even within Western culture, linear and cyclical conceptions of time had always coexisted.

9 Krenak (2019).
10 Estes (2019).
11 Evans-Pritchard (1940).
12 Fabian (1983).
13 Munn (1992).

However, she noted that the predominance of linear time in public life stemmed from its effectiveness in structuring and managing modern social institutions. The linearity of Western temporality, she argued, was not an inherent truth but rather a historical institutional design that shaped modern law and its accompanying ›mythology‹ – the idea that law is impartial, rational, secular, and the primary instrument for creating a just social order.[14]

By the late 20th and early 21st centuries, anthropological reflections on time increasingly focused on the relationship between time, power, and order. Scholars emphasized how institutions, governments, and other political actors shape perceptions and uses of time for political and social ends. Concepts such as *chronocracies* and *chronopolitics* emerged to analyze how temporal conceptions function as instruments of domination, hierarchy, and inequality. This body of work also underscored how, despite critical reevaluations of the essentialization of ›the time of others‹, such constructs continue to organize the world, reinforcing the structures of the contemporary capitalist system.[15]

In the field of history, concerns about time have taken a different trajectory. Studies on the Middle Ages and early European modernity were among the first to engage with reflections on time from various perspectives. One of the earliest contributions came from Lewis Mumford in *Technics and Civilization* (1934), where he examined how technological advancements influenced social organization and reshaped the experience of time and space.[16]

Decades later, historians from various historiographical schools explored transformations in modern conceptions of time. Jacques Le Goff (1960) examined medieval notions of time, particularly the tension between ecclesiastical and commercial time.[17] Carlo M. Cipolla (1967) studied the impact of mechanical clocks on European society from the 14th to the 18th century, highlighting their role in shaping a new temporal consciousness.[18] E. P. Thompson (1967) analyzed how industrialization and capitalism transformed conceptions of time and labor discipline in 18th- and 19th-century England.[19] Through such studies, historical scholarship constructed a narrative of ›Western time‹ as measurable, linear, and productivity-oriented, contrasting it with ›the time of others‹ as conceptualized in anthropology. This opposition reinforced the idea that non-Western societies remained tied to pre-modern temporalities – almost as if they provided a window into humanity's past within the present

Critical perspectives on historical studies of time did not challenge the notion of a homogeneous Western temporality; rather, they sought to theorize time as a category. Reinhart Koselleck's work was pivotal in this regard. His famous *Zeitschichten: Studien zur Historik* (1979) made a major contribution to historical theory and historiography by examining how societies have experienced and conceptualized time, shaping historical writing and understanding.[20] Koselleck reaffirmed the coexistence of multiple, sometimes conflicting temporalities, and proposed a periodization reflecting shifts in Western conceptions of time. His theoretical approach led to the development of the influential concept of *temporal acceleration*[21] – a transformation in the perception and experience of historical time in modern society. Tracing its origins to the 18th century, he identified the French Revolution as a paradigmatic event in this shift. According to Koselleck, the modern belief in progress and the conviction that the future would be better than the past fostered a stronger future orientation and an increasingly accelerated perception of time. The idea of temporal acceleration as a defining feature of the present has since been explored by various thinkers, including Paul Virilio,[22] Zygmunt Bauman,[23] and Hartmut Rosa.[24]

In historical studies, François Hartog expanded on Koselleck's periodization by developing the concept of different *regimes of historicity*.[25] He examined how European societies have valued the present over time, ultimately characterizing contemporary society as *presentist* – that is, prioritizing the present at the expense of deeper historical understanding and long-term future planning.

Over time, historical reflections on time converged with anthropological concerns, linking

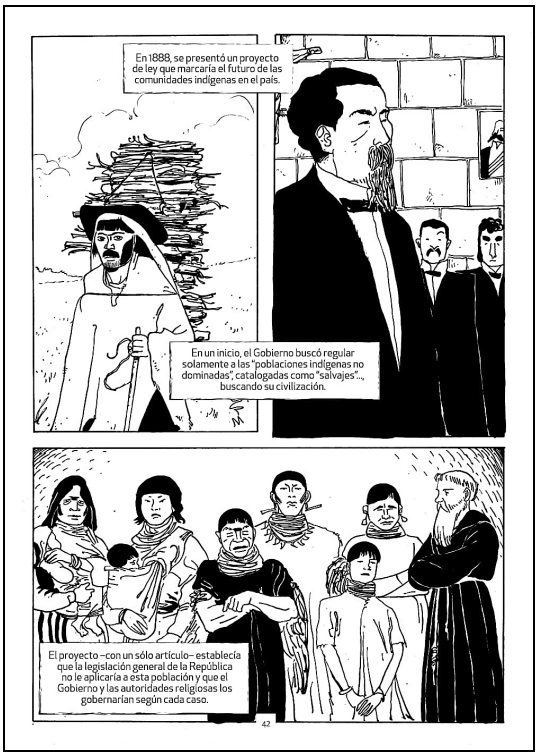
14 Greenhouse (1989).
15 Kirtsoglou / Simpson (eds.) (2020); Gell (2001).
16 Mumford (2010 [1934]).
17 Le Goff (1960).
18 Cipolla (1967).
19 Thompson (1967).
20 Koselleck (2001).
21 Koselleck (1993 [1979]).
22 Virilio (2006 [1977]); Virilio (1989 [1984]).
23 Bauman (2003 [2000]).
24 Rosa (2015 [2005]).
25 Hartog (2017 [2003]).

temporal analysis to issues of power, institutions, and the global economic order. However, unlike anthropology, historical studies of time have predominantly focused on the experiences of white, Christian, male-dominated Western Europe, often neglecting alternative temporal experiences both within and beyond ›the West‹. These considerations have been more thoroughly explored in anthropological, ethnohistorical, and decolonial studies.[26]

While contemporary historiography has moved beyond the ›history of the white man‹ framework, reflections on historical time have yet to be fully integrated into broader theoretical discussions. In many ways, efforts to make historical time more inclusive still rely on the dichotomy between ›the time of others‹ and ›Western time‹. Though conceptually essentialist, this dichotomy takes on new significance when viewed through the lens of social movements. The demand for a non-linear temporality has been re-signified as a critique of the Western heteropatriarchal political, economic, and cultural system. Black,[27] Indigenous,[28] and queer[29] communities worldwide have described their experience of historical time as cyclical or spiral-like – an alternative temporal framework that envisions a new political, economic, social, and cultural order. By extension, this perspective calls for a reimagining of law, its mythologies, and its promises.

The stories of struggles waged by those labeled as ›the other‹ serve, across different geographies, as catalysts for imagining new futures – futures untethered from the linearity imposed by progressivism. While European historiography critiques presentism, the unease of modern acceleration, and the sense of a foreclosed future, elsewhere we call for new histories, new narratives. We demand *historical justice*[30] and envision *pluriversal* futures – futures where we all belong.[31]

2014
¡QUÉ VIVA NUESTRO DERECHO! ¡QUÉ VIVA NUESTRA LEY! PERO... ¿DE QUÉ HABLAMOS CUANDO HABLAMOS DE DERECHO, CIUDADANÍA Y MOVILIZACIÓN?
¿LA HISTORIA DE LAS LUCHAS INDÍGENAS NOS AYUDA A ENTENDER LO COMPLEJO QUE PUEDEN SER LOS PROCESOS ORGANIZATIVOS?
EN NUESTRA ORGANIZACIÓN ESTUDIANTIL HEMOS TENIDO MUCHOS PROBLEMAS. CREEMOS QUE LA MEJOR ESTRATEGIA ES BUSCAR ALIADOS QUE PUEDAN CAMBIAR LAS REGLAS DEL JUEGO, USANDO LAS HERRAMIENTAS QUE EL ESTADO PROPORCIONA...
SÍ, PERO NO TODOS LO VEMOS ASÍ. ESO SUPONE QUE LAS LEYES SON NEUTRALES. PERO EN REALIDAD NO LO SON. ¡HASTA MI ABUELO LO SABÍA! ¡LAS LEYES SON PARA LOS DE RUANA!
¿ENTONCES QUÉ HACEMOS? ¿DESTRUIMOS TODO Y VAMOS A LA CÁRCEL? TENEMOS QUE ENFRENTAR MÚLTIPLES FRENTES: ALIARNOS CON LOS PODEROSOS, CONFIAR EN EL SISTEMA LEGAL Y NO PERDER DE VISTA NUESTROS INTERESES.
BUENO, ESTAS PREGUNTAS HAN SIDO PLANTEADAS POR DIFERENTES SECTORES A LO LARGO DE LA HISTORIA, INCLUYENDO EL MOVIMIENTO INDÍGENA...
41

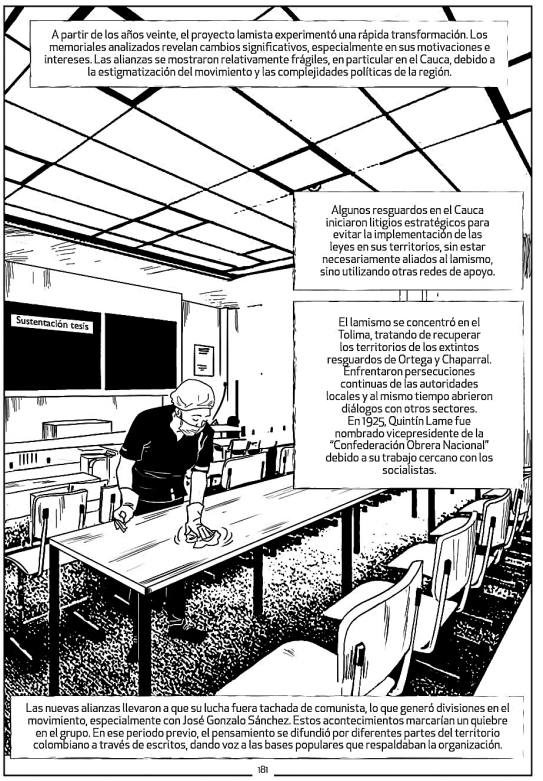

En 1888, se presentó un proyecto de ley que marcaría el futuro de las comunidades indígenas en el país.
En un inicio, el Gobierno buscó regular solamente a las "poblaciones indígenas no dominadas", catalogadas como "salvajes"... buscando su civilización.
El proyecto –con un sólo artículo– establecía que la legislación general de la República no le aplicaría a esta población y que el Gobierno y las autoridades religiosas los gobernarían según cada caso.
42

Comic panels depicting the three timelines: past, present, and future (Full size pictures on pages 108 and 118)

26 Smith (1999).
27 Martins (2021).
28 Gavilán Pinto (2012).
29 Freeman (2010).
30 Bevernage (2008).
31 Escobar (2018); Escobar (2020); De la Cadena / Blaser (eds.) (2018); Kothari et al. (eds.) (2019).

En la Quintinada, no solo chocaron los intereses de "indígenas" y "blancos", sino también modelos distintos de ciudadanías indígenas que aún no habían sido discutidos. Es crucial considerar que las posibilidades de acción de los líderes indígenas eran limitadas, lo que se tradujo en estrategias diferentes.
Aunque Güeinás se autoproclamaba general de los indígenas de Tierradentro y había triunfado en la guerra, su margen de acción era reducido debido a que Tierradentro era un bastión liberal y él era conservador. Su centro de acción estaba en San Francisco, en el norte del Cauca.
A pesar de sus diferencias políticas, tanto Güeinás (conservador) como Collo (liberal) participaron en la captura de Lame. Las diferencias políticas dentro de las parcialidades y las estrategias dispares lideradas por Güeinás, Collo, Yajimbó y Lame indican que las "mingas adoctrinadoras", que tanto preocupaban a las élites blanco-mestizas, fueron espacios de socialización y discusión política interrumpidos por los "eventos de Inzá".
141

Talking about law in everyday places
(Full size picture on page 130)


A partir de los años veinte, el proyecto lamista experimentó una rápida transformación. Los memoriales analizados revelan cambios significativos, especialmente en sus motivaciones e intereses. Las alianzas se mostraron relativamente frágiles, en particular en el Cauca, debido a la estigmatización del movimiento y las complejidades políticas de la región.
Algunos resguardos en el Cauca iniciaron litigios estratégicos para evitar la implementación de las leyes en sus territorios, sin estar necesariamente aliados al lamismo, sino utilizando otras redes de apoyo.
Sustentación tesis
El lamismo se concentró en el Tolima, tratando de recuperar los territorios de los extintos resguardos de Ortega y Chaparral. Enfrentaron persecuciones continuas de las autoridades locales y al mismo tiempo abrieron diálogos con otros sectores. En 1925, Quintín Lame fue nombrado vicepresidente de la "Confederación Obrera Nacional" debido a su trabajo cercano con los socialistas.
Las nuevas alianzas llevaron a que su lucha fuera tachada de comunista, lo que generó divisiones en el movimiento, especialmente con José Gonzalo Sánchez. Estos acontecimientos marcarían un quiebre en el grupo. En ese periodo previo, el pensamiento se difundió por diferentes partes del territorio colombiano a través de escritos, dando voz a las bases populares que respaldaban la organización.
181

History making in the time of COVID
(Full size picture on page 143)

III. The Past, the Present and the Future in *Camino y Ruptura*

The narrative structure of *Camino y Ruptura* intentionally intertwines the past, present, and future. The section dedicated to the past explores the land struggles led by various Indigenous leaders in the Gran Cauca region through a sequence of illustrations that highlights both the common threads in the fight for land and the diversity and complexity of these movements. The narrative challenges monolithic views of both Indigenous struggles and the state, presenting a rich tapestry of perspectives and strategies.

The collaborative design process between Miguel Ángel Vallejo (illustrator), María Juliana Vargas (image researcher), Oscar Pantoja (scriptwriter), and myself sought to trace how laws concerning Indigenous peoples – particularly Law 89 of 1890 and its subsequent amendments – were interpreted and utilized not only by state officials but also by Indigenous leaders as tools to challenge injustice. The illustrations in this timeline provide insight into the intricate political life of the region, emphasizing the role of litigation in shaping land struggles. They demonstrate that law is not a static system but a dynamic space of negotiation and contestation. This is achieved by depicting diverse contexts, from the creation of laws by state and non-state actors to their interpretation, discussion, application, and critique in both formal and informal settings. Each chapter brings to life the concept of »law in everyday life« – a law that is fluid, contextual, and constantly evolving.

To bring these stories to life, we engaged in a collective exercise of historical imagination, guided by rigorous research. Our goal was to envision *possible realities* beyond what the sources explicitly revealed. Drawing from photographs, postcards, newspaper articles, paintings, and personal experiences, we crafted dialogues, imagined emotions, constructed landscapes, and carefully positioned objects. Through these vivid scenes, we invite readers to immerse themselves in the everyday experience of legal practices.

The sequence addressing »the present« reflects on the research process itself – a dimension often overlooked in academic work. From the outset, it acknowledges the personal and professional journeys that shaped this project. Through visual storytelling, the comic captures moments of movement, archival exploration, fieldwork, family life, and the challenges posed by global events like the COVID-19 pandemic. These elements form the core of the research process, reminding us that even in solitude, historical inquiry is deeply relational. Interactions with colleagues, mentors, and communities provide essential support and inspiration, underscoring the collective nature of scholarship.

Finally, the sequence imagining the future invites readers to engage critically with the narrative, embracing both skepticism and commitment. By envisioning diverse reading contexts, it highlights spaces for intercultural dialogue and represents urban expressions of indigeneity. Through this approach, the comic encourages active participation in reshaping our shared histories. Ultimately, *Camino y Ruptura* seeks to bridge the divide between ›us‹ (non-Indigenous) and ›them‹ (Indigenous), challenging rigid distinctions between past, present, and future while fostering a more inclusive understanding of mestizo identity in contemporary Latin America.

To further expand the narrative, we invited eight regional illustrators – most of them Indigenous – to create frontispieces for each chapter. Their interpretations, accessible to readers via QR codes, add layers of meaning by drawing connections between the comic's themes and their own lived experiences. Through accompanying audio recordings, the artists share reflections on ethnicity, worldviews, gender, coexistence, and memory, offering fresh perspectives that complement – and at times challenge – the original research.

The artistic contributions do more than simply illustrate the historical narrative; in many cases, they bring forth contrasting interpretations. A particularly striking example is the theme of unity. While the historical research aimed to uncover the plurality of political strategies employed by Indigenous leaders – highlighting internal conflicts and political disagreements – the testimonies framed division as a challenge to overcome. In everyday life, the weight of these divisions was more deeply felt than historiographic analysis alone could capture.

As a result, the artists' reflections consistently underscore the urgency of unity in the present, emphasizing the need to revitalize alternative legal frameworks rooted in ancestral traditions and to continue historical struggles. This contrasts with Yolanda Guaical's words from the 1970s: »Our rights will soon change in our favor.« While Guaical's statement reflected hope in a moment of political mobilization, the artists' call for unity today speaks to the ongoing challenges Indigenous communities face in sustaining their struggles across generations.

For colonized peoples, the relationship with state law is one of ongoing contradiction – recognizing its inevitability while also desiring to transform it. A history of law that focuses solely on the creation, interpretation, and use of legal statutes, without considering how people experience, live, and feel legal orders, remains incomplete. *Camino y Ruptura* serves as a space where law is not only analyzed but also visualized – where legal norms are lived, experienced, and, at times, suffered. By incorporating regional artists and their interpretations of the

¡EL ESTADO ES UN CORO DE VOCES QUE NO CANTAN AL UNÍSONO! NO HAY DERECHO SIN POLÍTICA".
El alcalde contó con una importante red de colaboradores, todos ellos poderosos: abogados y terratenientes con suficiente capital político.
Los cabildantes contaron con el apoyo de una red tanto de indígenas como de no indígenas. Gracias a la solidez de su caso, contaron incluso con el favor de las autoridades... pero estaban muy lejos de sus supuestos aliados.
¿YA LEYÓ EL CÓMIC DE LA HISTORIADORA ESA? ¡DESCUBRIÓ QUE EL AGUA MOJA! COMO SI NO SUPIÉRAMOS QUE EL DERECHO Y LA POLÍTICA SIEMPRE HAN ESTADO UNIDOS...
BUENO, ES QUE POR MUCHO TIEMPO SE PENSÓ QUE NUESTRA POSICIÓN HABÍA SIDO PASIVA Y CASI NO SE HA MIRADO LA DIMENSIÓN JURÍDICA Y POLÍTICA DE NUESTRA LUCHA...
BUENO, MUY BONITA SU CHARLA PERO NOS TOCA APURAR EL PASO QUE NOS ESTÁN ESPERANDO EN LA PLAZA... ESTA LUCHA NO ACABA.
69

Uncovering what's always been there: the historian realizes that law and politics cannot be separated
(Full size picture on page 155)

present, the comic fosters dialogue about the contradictions inherent in multi-normative contexts.

Ultimately, constructing these ›scenarios‹ brings research closer to the creation of plural and critical citizenships – no longer rooted in paternalism but in a collective commitment to knowledge production. In weaving together these threads, the comic becomes not just a reflection of history but a call to action – a reminder that the stories we tell shape who we are and who we can become.

■

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Mujer indígena yanacona, diseñadora gráfica interesada en abordar desde el diseño de proyectos de investigación-creación la producción de material educativo sobre temáticas de educación sexual y de género con jóvenes, niñas y niños del sector educativo público. Integrante de Aquelarre, laboratorio de diseño feminista, parte del equipo editorial de la revista *Ácida* y coordinadora de la revista *Unidad Álvaro Ulcué* del programa de comunicaciones del CRIC.

Para conocer más sobre la ilustración "Las múltiples formas de lucha" escanee este código.

Frontispiece illustrated by artist Natalia Fernández: »Soon We Will Have the Rights That Belong to Us«
(Full size pictures on pages 261 and 262)

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